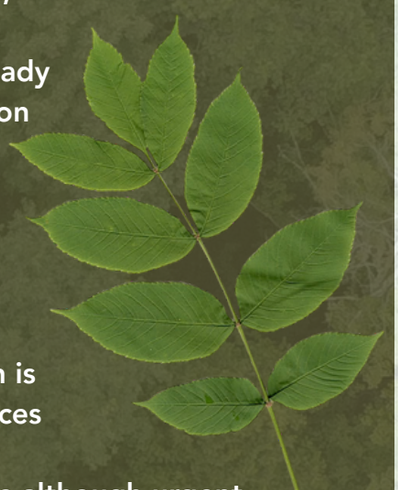
SAVING VERMONT'S BLACK ASH

Black Ash Seed Collection and Preservation

We Need Your Help!

Emerald Ash Borer Impacts

The larvae of emerald ash borer (EAB), an introduced beetle first identified in the US in 2002, tunnel beneath the bark of ash trees, disrupting their ability to move water and nutrients. They kill the vast majority of mature native trees they encounter. EAB has already spread across much of Vermont, threatening statewide devastation of ash trees.



Why black ash?

Although all three of Vermont's native ash species are highly susceptible to EAB, black ash (also known as brown ash) dies off even more quickly than white and green ash. Moreover, black ash is less common than the other two species, is harder to find, produces seed less frequently, and has both great cultural significance to Indigenous tribes and particular ecosystem importance. Therefore,although urgent conservation measures need to be taken for all three species, black ash requires especially focused efforts to help enable its persistence.



Seed collection – an opportunity not to be missed

Seed collection is one step that can be taken to help achieve long-term conservation and restoration of black ash. To safeguard this species' genetic diversity for the future, seed needs to be collected while there are still enough healthy, mature trees across the state. You can play an important role in this effort by letting us know of places where black ash trees occur so they can be targeted for seed collection. Signs point to 2026 potentially being a mast year for black ash—a period of unusually high seed production—and this could be the last mast year before the species is largely wiped out in the state, making it a critical window for collection.

What will be done with collected seed?

Seeds collected this fall will be prepared and shipped by the Intervale Center for long-term storage, with a focus of sending seeds to Tribal Nation nurseries and a federal storage facility. There, they will be available to support future ash restoration efforts statewide. Some seeds might be used to grow seedlings to screen for EAB resistance.

Seed collection
Fall 2026

Seed storage and distribution

Seedling nursery

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Other ways to help achieve ash conservation

Reporting the locations of black ash can also help other efforts to conserve this species in the state, including by enabling detection of "*lingering ash*" – mature trees that retain healthy crowns during and after peak EAB invasion levels. Such trees show EAB resistance that can be used in selective breeding programs. You can play a role in detecting these trees by monitoring ash health and reporting those that remain healthy.

Additional ash conservation approaches underway include encouraging natural regeneration where possible, releasing biocontrol (parasitoids of EAB eggs and larvae), protecting individual trees with insecticide treatments, and retaining some ash in managed stands rather than proactively cutting all ash to capture value.

How to get involved in this project

The most valuable thing you can do for this project is to help us find ash trees to collect from. If you own or know of land with black ash, we want to hear from you.

Step 1: Find Black Ash

- Look for black ash in wet areas: forested wetlands, bogs, seeps, and stream edges with saturated soils
- Report only sites with a minimum of five black ash individuals

Step 2: Report Your Trees

Submit your report through the MaMA Vermont Landowner Ash Stand Survey on Anecdata:
anecdata.org/projects/view/mama-ash-reports

The Anecdata form captures location, species, tree health, and photos. Your report goes directly to a number of regional partners leading seed collection efforts including Intervale Center, Vermont Land Trust, Northwoods Stewardship Center, The Nature Conservancy and Smokey House Center, who will follow up to schedule a site assessment.

Step 3: Support Fall Collection

- Seed collection teams will visit confirmed sites in fall to collect from trees bearing seeds
- Landowners may be invited to join the collection visit (potential for a seed collection event with community members TBD)



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Black Ash: A Special Species

Ecosystem services: Regulating water levels in wetlands, enriching soils with nitrogen and phosphorous, feeding tadpoles and caddisflies

Cultural significance: For the Abenaki and other Indigenous peoples of the Wabanaki Confederacy, it is the primary material for traditional basketry and, in legend, the tree from which the first Abenaki people emerged. Tribes within the Haudenosaunee Confederacy also hold deep relationships with black ash, with the Mohawk community of Akwesasne leading initiatives to preserve this important tree.

Useful Resources:
ID guide: Ash Protection Collaboration Across Waponahkik
EAB in Vermont: VT EAB Tracking Map
Signs of EAB infestation: Maine Forest Service Guide
For forest managers: VLT Management Tips
Detecting and reporting lingering ash for resistance breeding: Monitoring and Managing Ash (MaMA)

In partnership with:

Smokey House Center, Danby, VT
Forests, Parks & Recreation Vermont, Agency of Natural Resources
Intervale Center
NorthWoods Stewardship Center — connecting people and place through science, education, and action
Vermont Land Trust — Uniting Land and Lives
APCAW — Ash Protection Collaboration Across Waponahkik
Ecological Research Institute
Forest Stewards Guild
The Nature Conservancy

